

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.

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BOOK II. CHAPTER V. AUDREY'S NARRATIVE.  
MADELEINE KINDERSLEY.

"A FEW words of retrospect are necessary, it seems to me, at this point in my simple story, to explain why there had existed up to the epoch which it has reached, no intimacy between myself and the Kindersleys, though Mr. Kindersley and my father had been friends for several years, and my brother had gone into Mr. Kindersley's bank, instead of into Her Majesty's service. As a matter of fact, I hardly knew Madeleine Kindersley by sight, for her mother had made a point of not visiting anyone concerning whom the nice distinction of 'county' or not 'county' could be raised; and before the young lady had been sent abroad to complete her education, my opportunities of observing her were limited to her appearances at divine service in the handsome pew, which, among the humble seats in the parish church, was as Kindersley's bank among the commercial buildings of Wrottesley, and her occasional passings-by the Dingle House, in her mother's carriage, which eclipsed the equipage of Mrs. Delamere herself.

"Until Mrs. Kindersley died, it never had occurred to me that anyone's death could be otherwise than a cause of profound sorrow to everybody who was related to, or even acquainted with, the deceased person. The new light which penetrated my perceptions on that occasion was one of the distinctive, never-to-be-forgotten lessons of experience, after which

one never feels quite the same again. Everybody was very decorous about it, and Mr. Kindersley was exemplary; but that nobody was really sorry, and that in some quarters the deceased lady was what Mrs. Gummidge styles 'a riddance,' was plain. Mrs. Kindersley was a handsome lady, of good family; and when she, who was undeniably 'county,' condescended to marry the banker, it was generally, but unfairly, imputed to the fact that her family had less to boast of in purse than in pedigree. It was not a happy marriage, though it had all the elements, save one, which are supposed to go to the making of happiness; that one was good temper on Mrs. Kindersley's part. I do not believe she was an ill-intentioned person in any way, but she succeeded as thoroughly in making everybody about her miserable, as if she had applied all her faculties to that end. It was understood that Mrs. Kindersley's pet peculiarity was an instinctive aversion to her husband's friends, and her favourite method of asserting her position was by strong opposition to the wishes of every member of her family, however blameless and reasonable those wishes were in themselves. These things I knew only through rumour, but I could see for myself that Madeleine Kindersley, for all her handsome dress, and fine carriage, did not look particularly happy. There were some stories about Clement Kindersley, the banker's only son—for in that house also the children were but two—which indicated that he was not disposed to be ruled by his mother's capricious government. Clement Kindersley was not a youth of promise. Among Mrs. Kindersley's 'ways' was the most accommodatingly delicate health

possible. She invariably suffered from severe nervous headache, whenever it was within the bounds of probability that anyone might expect her to do anything not positively amusing; and anything like domestic opposition unfailingly resulted in her taking to her bed. These periods of retirement, which were disrespectfully called by the household, 'missus's fits of the sulks,' increased in frequency after Madeleine had been sent to a fine finishing-school at Paris, and it began to be believed that Mrs. Kindersley was really in delicate health. So well founded was this impression, that on a certain occasion, Mrs. Kindersley, having taken to her bed, did not leave it again alive; and then there came a temporary reaction of feeling about her on the part of the Wrottesley people, who said she had no doubt been a much more amiable person than was generally supposed, and that it was a great shame to have made so light of her ailments.

"Madeleine Kindersley remained at the finishing-school in Paris for some time after her mother's death, and, during that interval, the old friendship between Mr. Kindersley and my father found a practical expression in Griffith's appointment to a high stool in the bank, and the daily enjoyment of the society of Mr. Finlay, the cashier. This gentleman was the most colourless individual imaginable; I cannot think of any characteristic of his, except his excessive near-sightedness. Griffith was near-sighted, and, to my great annoyance, used glasses when he was reading of an evening and in business hours; but he was lynx-eyed in comparison with Mr. Finlay. Mr. Kindersley was a kindly-tempered, good-looking, middle-aged gentleman, with an habitual expression of anxiety in his face, and I had not spoken to him a dozen times in my life before the dinner-party at Lady Olive Despard's. But he had taken a good deal of notice of me on that occasion, which, however, had not led me to form any such expectations as had presented themselves to the sanguine fancy of Miss Minnie Kellett; and I had had leisure, among my numerous preoccupations, to observe that he seemed much more cheerful and talkative, than on the few former occasions when I had seen him.

"With these tedious, but not unnecessary remarks, I proceed to record a remarkable illustration, furnished by my experience, of the truth of the saying, 'It never rains but it pours.'

"I slipped upstairs to my room for a moment, to give my hair a touch with a brush and to take off my apron, and then I presented myself in the drawing-room, where I found my father and Mr. Kindersley standing with their backs to the fire, and Miss Kindersley making timid advances to Agrippa, my father's cat, who was a general household idol, and who received her attentions with roundabout acquiescence, not committing himself to any warm or decided friendship.

"I thought, with my first glance at her, that Mr. Lester was not so extravagantly wrong as he might have been in pronouncing Madeleine Kindersley beautiful. I acknowledged her to be so, much more heartily than on the evening of Lady Olive Despard's dinner-party. She faced me as I opened the door of the drawing-room, and looked up at me as she stooped over Agrippa, stroking his silken sides, with a most lovely smile.

"I had not cared particularly, up to that time, about my personal appearance. I did not fancy myself pretty; but I had a sort of notion that I was odd and clever-looking, and that to be so was better and more interesting. But, as I looked at Madeleine Kindersley, the fond and baseless illusion deserted me for ever. No oddity, no cleverness, in fact or appearance, could be better than such eyes and skin, such a form, such a colouring as hers. She was the very personification of youthful bloom and of girlish delicacy—a flower-like, poetical creature; as different from me as if we had not belonged to the same species in creation. Her manners had acquired ease and graciousness without artificiality; and the soft, girlish simplicity of her smile, her voice, and her movements had a captivating charm for me—all the more potent, no doubt, for its contrast with my own somewhat abrupt, unmannerly, and inconsiderate ways. She rose and held out a hand, beside which mine was like a brown paw; and Mr. Kindersley came towards me, in his ceremonious but good-natured way.

"'Madeleine has lost no time in renewing her acquaintance with you, Miss Dwaris,' he said. 'Except to the Court, this is her first visit.'

"'You are very kind,' I said, with painfully conscious awkwardness; and Mr. Kindersley turned towards my father again, and resumed his conversation with him, leaving Madeleine and myself to surmount the difficulties of first acquaintance

without assistance. This was readily done, aided, as we respectively were, by strong curiosity, and the slight interest which each had aroused in the other on the occasion of our only previous meeting. Presently my father and Mr. Kindersley went away to my father's room;—and we were left together, to grow momentarily more intimate and unrestrained.

"Small as the Dingle House was in comparison with Beech Lawn, Mr. Kindersley's handsome residence, which was three miles beyond Wrotesley, and also on the northern road, and insignificant as were all my belongings in comparison with those of the banker's daughter, everything in my home was novel to her, and after the fashion of girls, she was curious about it all. The shyness common to our mutual strangeness subsided very soon. I think I recovered from it first, being more accustomed to independence, and having the advantage of being on my own ground. Miss Kindersley told me that she had very few acquaintances, and no friends, and that her father hoped she and I should 'suit each other.' Here was something to increase my self-importance, to make me think myself somebody! Here was a second edition of my unknown uncle Pemberton, and my unknown cousin Ida—a further expansion of the narrow horizon of my life!

"We talked over the dinner-party at Lady Olive Despard's, and the people who were there, I remember, with one exception. Madeleine did not mention Mr. Lester to me, and I did not introduce his name into our conversation. I confess that I felt it a mean thing on my part to suppress it, considering the admiration of her which Mr. Lester had expressed to Miss Minnie Kellett; but she evidently took no interest in him, and I hardly knew her well enough yet to repeat a personal compliment. She thought Lord Barr very pleasant and good-natured, and she was quite enthusiastic about Lady Olive.

"Poor mamma knew her very well," said Madeleine, "and she has been very kind since I came home."

"This was a subject which never aroused enthusiasm on my part, and I answered so coldly that Miss Kindersley looked surprised. I came out with my reasons with my usual frankness, or imprudence. I thought Lady Olive liked to have influence over people, and to impose her own ideas upon them; and I did not care for that sort of thing. I forget how Madeleine

answered; with some gentle deprecation, no doubt. The next theme which was started between us was that of our respective brothers. They were, in reality, the source of the present commencement of relations between us; and the young man whose life Griffith had saved from the river, and whose person he had subsequently, on many occasions during his school career, protected from the fists of his school-fellows, was Madeleine's only brother, as Griffith was mine. Here, however, all resemblance ceased. Clement Kindersley was as unlike my brother as Madeleine was unlike me, and he did not interest me in the least. I had often seen him about with Griffith, though he was not a frequent visitor at the Dingle House, and he had never attracted me. He was like his sister—too like, considering the difference of sex; but the delicacy of feature, which, in her case, constituted beauty, made him merely that detestable creature, a pretty young man; and the expression of her face was timid and artless, whereas the expression of his was sly and distrustful. Clement Kindersley was thin and delicate-looking, and even in his affection for Griffith, and his clinging to him, there was something weak and dependent, at variance with the manliness without which no physical beauty or intellectual accomplishment could, at any time, have had any charm for me.

"Thus, though Madeleine Kindersley and I discussed our respective brothers, we did not do so on equal grounds. I really could not be actually interested in or enthusiastic about Clement Kindersley; but his sister plainly did not mind my vague manner of treating the subject, and it dawned upon me as being just possible that she herself did not care very vehemently about her brother. She seemed, I thought, rather anxious to find out what Griffith thought of Clement—whether he considered him steady, and how much the two young men saw of each other.

"I have been so long away from home," said Madeleine, a little nervously, "and I really know so little of boys—or, I ought to say, young men: Clement would be furious if he knew I called him a boy—that I can't judge whether he is going on well. Of course, papa thinks a great deal of him; and, of course, Clement thinks a great deal of himself—that's natural, I suppose; but it is not evidence, you know."

"I did not want to let Clement Kindersley's sister perceive that my propos-



sessions were not in his favour; so I answered, in general terms, that our brothers were 'great friends,' and that Griffith thought Clement very clever, but did not think he had much taste for business.

"No, that's just it," said Madeleine; 'he has not, and it must be such a disappointment to papa. He is so proud of the bank, you know; he has been so content with it all his life; and now he sees that Clement doesn't take to it—that he doesn't take to anything, in fact. I don't really know what his notions about himself and his future are.'

"I did not know either, but I suspected that my father and Griffith regarded Mr. Kindersley as very much to be pitied on account of his son, and considered that young gentleman unlikely to 'come to good.' But I was not so devoid of tact as to divulge that opinion to my visitor; so I produced certain second-hand generalities which I had picked up, respecting the common fate of parents, in finding their sons indifferent to the matters which most deeply interested themselves, and turned the conversation to the more congenial theme of Griffith.

"I have no doubt I romanced a little in describing my life with my brother. There was a spice of temptation in the contrast between my own lot and that of Madeleine Kindersley in this particular, and I yielded to it.

"By the time that my father's conference with Mr. Kindersley was concluded, and that gentleman reappeared and took his daughter away, Madeleine and I had made a considerable advance towards friendship. I liked her, and she seemed to like me, in her quiet way. Something new and pleasant had come into my life. I walked with our visitors to the garden-gate. Mr. Kindersley and his daughter had come to the Dingle House on foot, and I could not help wondering what Mrs. Kindersley would have thought of so undignified a proceeding on the occasion of a first visit. I took leave of them there, after having received a very kind invitation from Mr. Kindersley to dine at Beech Lawn a few days later. Hitherto I had never seen the inside of the house. I looked after the father and daughter, as they walked away together, with a strong sense of the companionship between them, and a feeling of pity for the dead woman who was so little missed or mourned. I would rather not have believed that Madeleine Kindersley was better without

her mother than with her; but I had to believe it; and the necessity taught me, more than many sermons could have taught me, of the truths of human life and character. 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again.' What stores of love and self-sacrifice, of devotion and well-doing, had Mrs. Kindersley meted out in her time to those of her household, so that they should hold her in perpetual and loving memory? What was to be the measure of their remembrance and their grief?

"Before Madeleine returned from the Parisian finishing-school—which deserved support if it had really had much to do with the simple grace of her manners and the cultivated refinement of her mind—Mr. Kindersley's aspect had been sufficiently grave and careworn to give him credit for grief of the most orthodox kind and depth; but I instinctively referred his gravity and gloom to disquiet concerning his son. Clement Kindersley was not much talked about at the Dingle House, but I knew, somehow, that he was doing badly, disappointing his father, discrediting his friends, and displeasing Griffith. I did not happen to like him, or it is possible I might have regarded him as an injured victim, when certain rumours about him reached me indirectly. Girls at my then age are sometimes foolishly disposed to feel interest and curiosity in 'wild' young men. They would feel neither, but very profound disgust instead, if they had any notion of the meaning of 'wildness.' I had no notion on the subject; but as I did not like the only 'wild' young man with whom I had any acquaintance, my ignorance was not perilous to me.

"I once asked Griffith—it was before Madeleine's return—whether he and Clement continued to be as good friends as they had formerly been; and he answered, shortly:

"There's a great difference between boys and men. Clement is a man now, and the head partner's only son, you must remember."

"I had heard a good deal after that, but as it could only have annoyed Griffith to have it repeated, I said nothing about it.

"I remembered these things as I re-entered the house, and took up a book, in anything but an attentive mood, after Madeleine Kindersley's visit. I remembered, also, how Miss Minnie Kellett had



irritated me by one of her characteristic speeches, on the day when Griffith first went to the bank.

"Dear me! It's almost a consolation for your brother's not going into the army, to think that you will be quite intimate with the bank family in future," was the sympathetic utterance of Miss Minnie; and how it had vexed me!

"Here was the proposed inauguration of the predicted intimacy, and I was glad of it. My undisciplined youthful pride was conquered by the natural liking for companionship, the natural admiration for Madeleine, which I was not mean enough to suppress—though I did not see any occasion for so very vehement an expression of it as Mr. Lester's—and by the delightful sense of novelty.

"When Griffith came in, I had quite a budget of news for him, and, with my customary inconsistency, I talked myself into a state of enthusiasm about Miss Kindersley's good looks, which fully equalled that in which I supposed Mr. Lester to be.

"And she must be wonderfully unlike her mother," I remember saying, 'for she is not a bit conceited or ill-natured. I am sure you will be delighted with her, and she means to come and see me very often.'

"That will be very nice for you," said Griffith; 'but I am not likely to profit much by it; for, of course, she will be here when I shall be at the bank.'

"Ah, but you are to see her," I answered, triumphantly. 'Mr. Kindersley has asked us to dine at Beech Lawn on Thursday, you and I; you know he said he was well aware there was no use in trying to induce papa to dine out, and I am so glad. It will be ever so much better fun than Despard Court.'

"Despard Court is very good fun.'

"But Lady Olive's quite an old woman in comparison with girls like us. We mean to be such friends, Griffith.'

"I am very glad to hear it. Has Miss Kindersley put our unknown cousin out of your head?"

"Rather, I think. But then she will not be here for a long time. Is it not strange that a little while ago I had no friends—no particular friends of my own, I mean, for I don't count the Lipscotts, they are too much taken up with themselves and each other—and now I have at least the chance of two.'

"I am sure I was perfectly happy in those days, and that I had no morbid

notions of any kind. I never called my life monotonous, or so thought of it, even in that innermost retreat of human perversity and ingratitude—my inmost heart; but the sense of change was grateful, even delightful, to me. Like the faint stir and odour of spring in the early year, there came to me some music and perfume of added vitality; new interests and ideas. Not that I recognised those fine things in my own feelings, or occupied myself at all with analysing them. Indeed my thoughts speedily centred themselves upon the grand question of whether I could or could not have a new dress—it was called a 'frock' in those days in quiet behind-the-time Wrotesley—for Miss Kindersley's dinner-party. It had not come into my head to wish for one wherewith to inaugurate my first entrance into grown-up dinner company at Despard Court; I had been perfectly satisfied with the white muslin gown I had worn at the Lipscotts', divested of its flower trimmings, and simply adorned with a sash. But my ideas were enlarging; I had dreamed of London since then, had a glimpse of luxury in the image of my unknown cousin and the person of Madeleine Kindersley, and my self-importance had received a decided accession.

"The consultation with Frosty, to which I speedily resorted, did not result favourably to my wishes. Mrs. Frost was a wise woman, and she viewed the 'frock' question in more than one aspect.

"It isn't as you didn't ought to have it, Miss Audrey," she said, shaking her head gravely; 'nor yet as your pa would make objections; but, you see, there's policy in all things, whatever you may think. Now, it's never sensible to begin with people any how but the way you mean to go on with them, and you can't go on dressing like Miss Kindersley, you know.'

"But," I objected, 'I don't think of such a thing. I don't want to dress like Miss Kindersley; of course I know that would be absurd. I only want a new gown for the first time I go to Beech Lawn.'

"I wouldn't have it, my dear," said Frosty, earnestly; 'not that I don't want you to look as nice as anybody; but there's nobody quicker than rich people to see anything extravagant, and'—going back to her first point—'if you're going to be up at Beech Lawn constant, you'd much better begin as you mean to go on.'

"I yielded to Frosty's judgment, arrayed myself for my first appearance at Beech Lawn in the white gown which had already

done duty on the two 'grown-up' occasions of my life, and was rewarded by finding Madeleine Kindersley almost as plainly dressed as myself, when Griffith and I were ushered into the drawing-room at Beech Lawn on the following Thursday. How pretty she looked in the well-warmed, well-lighted, handsome room, and how prettily she received us, with that attractive mixture of timidity and ease which lent her manner a peculiar charm, which I have never seen in that of any other person!

"Beech Lawn was not a very extensive place, but it was beautifully kept, and the gardens were lovely. They constituted the sole hobby of Mr. Kindersley, outside his business. The house was substantial, well built, commodious, and furnished with a degree of sumptuousness entirely novel to my experience—which indeed was very limited. I should have found occupation and amusement enough for the whole of my first evening there, only in examining the pictures, the china, the ornaments of the drawing-room, and the delightful little boudoir beyond it, which Madeleine called her 'nest.' The young mistress of such a house had something enviable in her destiny, and all the more so as she was independent in her rule. Mr. Kindersley was of the same mind as my father with respect to keeping the family circle unbroken, and had resisted all the well-meant advice which urged him to provide his daughter with a companion. He hoped, he said, in reply to counsel on this point, that he and Madeleine would be company for each other; and he believed Madeleine would best fulfil her responsibilities if she had to face them unassisted. So, the banker's daughter was as happy as a princess, and as free as air, according to my summing up of her position.

"It was a pleasant little party, and I enjoyed it very much. No one who interested me particularly was there, and I had not much private talk with Madeleine, who had to attend to two married ladies among her guests. Clement Kindersley did not make his appearance—a circumstance which caused me no regret, and his sister but little surprise, if one may judge by the careless tone in which she said to her father, when the number of the party was complete, with the exception of her brother:

"'We don't wait for Clement, I suppose?'

"After Mr. Kindersley had answered in the negative by a shake of the head, he approached Griffith and spoke to him. I did not hear what was said by either; but I fancied that Mr. Kindersley inquired of Griffith whether he knew anything of Clement's whereabouts, and that my brother told him that he had not seen him. A shade passed over the banker's face, and he sighed.

"We had some music in the evening; and I found that Madeleine Kindersley was a real proficient in the art. She sang beautifully, in a rich contralto voice, and with perfect taste. Griffith sang two or three duets with her, and their voices harmonised delightfully. I wished my father could have heard them. The distance between the Dingle House and Beech Lawn rendered it necessary for Griffith and me to have a fly to take and bring us back. My brother had been talkative enough on our way to Beech Lawn, but he was silent and preoccupied as we drove back, and gave me so many monosyllabic answers to my questions, that I gave up asking them at length, and sagely concluded that he was thinking about Clement Kindersley."

#### A MAHOMMEDAN REFORMER.

At the present moment, when all religions are labouring in the throes of reform, every phase is of interest. More especially is this the case, when news reaches us of internal changes in a religion so stationary in character as that of Islam. One of the salient features of Christianity consists in its capability for progress, while the distinctive feature of Mahomedanism is its letter worship and formalism. The reiteration of Koran texts, coupled with a blind superstitious obedience to its laws, suffices to ensure the true believer's welfare. Gross ignorance and stupidity, mental slothfulness and jesuitical evasion of the spirit of the prophetic commands, are unhappily the concomitants of such a system, and hinder the creed of Islam from realising Carlyle's verdict, that the "religion of Mahomet is a kind of Christianity." Yet even rigid Islamism has experienced faint pulsation of the modern restlessness, and this most stereotyped of all forms has given forth signs of renewed life and vigour. It is in Southern Arabia this movement is most remarkable, and is due in great measure to the exertions of a reformer named Hadschi Wekkes.

Probably few travellers passing through Aden, en route for India, have ever heard of the existence of this sage; certainly no one but the Freiherr Heinrich von Maltzan has, to our knowledge, ever mentioned him among their Arabian recollections. This distinguished traveller's observations have been unusually minute and fortunate. He has been one of the most energetic of Eastern explorers, and his labours have been particularly directed towards the little-known regions of Southern Arabia. His perfect knowledge of the Arab tongue permitted him to converse freely with the natives, while his acquaintance with their manners and customs enabled him to accomplish a pilgrimage to Mecca, in the disguise of a Mussulman. He was discovered before visiting Medina, and forced to fly from the fury of the populace. Since then, until his recent death, Maltzan lived principally at Algiers, only undertaking smaller journeys, of all which he has left interesting accounts. He does not relate how and when he first became acquainted with Hadschi Wekkes; but their intercourse appears to have been of an intimate character, since the sage voluntarily told him the whole story of his life.

Hadschi Wekkes was born in an obscure village, pitched amid the sandy steppes of Southern Arabia. His parents were poor, the child was put to tend sheep, and consequently had not time to resort to school, where his reasoning powers would have been deadened, and where he would merely have learnt some chapters of the Koran. Possessing an open mind, vivid phantasy, and intelligent curiosity, the boy taught himself many useful lessons during his long solitary rambles after his sheep. The wish to learn was awakened in his heart, but he did not know where to apply for instruction. Then there came to him rumours concerning a wise man living somewhere among the mountains. How to get at him was the problem. The boy reflected that pasture would be at least as plentiful on the heights of the hills as at their base, where his sheep grazed daily. What hindered him from leading them to browse on these heights? His family would not wonder at his absence so long as the sheep were well tended, and of their well-being any mountain dweller descending into the plain could report. So one day he carried his plan into execution, and proceeded to ascend Mount Sabber, one of the loftiest of the

South Arabian heights, on which he learnt the wise man had taken up his abode.

Three days were required to drive his little flock to the summit, a journey keenly enjoyed by the young shepherd, to whom a totally new world was revealed. He revelled in the splendours of nature, beheld for the first time; the tall trees, the luscious green foliage, the bright-coloured flowers. So deeply did these impressions sink into his soul, that many years after he wrought them all into a graceful poem.

At last the summit was reached; and the boy was amazed, enraptured, at the sight that greeted his eyes. A blooming green vale spread before him, through which flowed a limpid brook. Traversing this, he soon found himself in the midst of trees. It was the first forest he had ever seen, and he did not know the trees, for none such grew in the valley. The scent of their leaves was delicious, and pierced his brain like an aroma from heaven. It nearly entranced him without causing a state of dull, heavy insensibility, like the odour of intoxicating opiates. It was more like a soft delicate mist that slightly veiled the senses, without robbing perception and reason of any of their power.

This wood, with its wondrous influence upon the senses, recalled to mind something Hadschi Wekkes had heard in early boyhood. An old man, a narrator of fairy tales, sojourned for some time in his native village. One of his favourite stories was about a forest in which grew odorous trees laden with delicious fruits. Their branches supported, all in one season, buds, blossoms, and berries. The flowers, of a hyacinth form, were of many colours, from pale red and golden yellow to light blue. Their aspect utterly fascinated the beholder, and tempted him to pluck their aromatic chalices, whilst the red juice which occasionally dropped from the fruits when over-ripeness had torn their covering, invited him to a sweet repast. Yet this enjoyment was not easy of attainment; nay, the greatest danger threatened him who attempted to procure it, for the trunk of each tree was encircled by a gold-glittering snake, that stretched out a fiery head and greedy tongue to every newcomer. Most people turned back at this sight, but some courageous spirits, thinking this kind of snake was harmless, ventured to approach the trees. They were instantly bitten, and fell back horror-stricken. Nor was their terror groundless, for, in truth, the bite was fatal to the



audacious meddler. Nevertheless, some few survived to enjoy the luscious fruits, but these favoured few were not the cold men of reason who were only capable of doubting that the serpent's bite was venomous; they were the warm glowing hearts, who, filled with ardent yearning after the fruits, heeded not their wounds, but plucked the berries, and eat them in spite of their pain. Now in these berries was the poison's cure, and likewise the capacity of inexpressible happiness.

In after years this fable was expounded to the lad. The fruit was Wisdom; the serpent's bite, the erring thoughts of the brain. The former can only be obtained if we have bravely combatted the latter, and have not succumbed to their deadly influence.

Suddenly Hadschi Wekkes saw a human being among the trees. It was a young girl, plucking leaves. He went up and accosted her, having heard that freer customs prevail among the mountain inhabitants, where a man may speak to women. She looked surprised at his appearance; he, too, was struck with hers, for she was whiter than any woman he had ever seen.

"What do you do with those leaves?" he asked.

She gave no reply, but put one in her mouth, and began to chew it.

"Are these leaves food for man?" he asked again.

"They are not food," she answered, "they cheer the heart."

Then Hadschi Wekkes perceived that these were the Kaat leaves which brighten the mind, without harming the body. Down in the valley, Kaat leaves are only to be purchased with gold, and none but the rich can partake of them, while here the delicious indulgence was accessible to all.

"You mountain dwellers must be a happy people," he said.

"Come with me and judge for yourself," replied the girl.

They walked on together, and soon came upon pretty little houses that peeped out from amidst a green and shady grove. Every wall was clad with vines, heavily laden fruit-trees stood in the gardens, under whose shade sprawled huge melons. Water was abundant. Hadschi Wekkes thought to behold a Paradise. As they passed one of the larger houses, the girl uttered a shrill call, whereupon many boys and girls came trooping out, who gazed at the sunburnt stranger in wonderment.

"Whence comes this brown boy?" they asked; for they were all as white as the girl he had met.

The boys were bold, and inclined to be rude. When he noticed this, he proposed to fight them, and did beat a few, after which they grew more friendly. The girls were all kind. Two sisters of his companion took possession of Hadschi Wekkes, and led him to their parents, who received him with much cordiality. They gave him the Lokma (salt and bread) at once, so that they instantly became his sworn friends, and he theirs.

This was Hadschi Wekkes's first acquaintance with a mountain village. His new friends pressed him to remain among them, and tried to discourage his burning desire to find the holy man.

"This Abdallah is a heretic," they said; "he does not read the Koran, nor believe implicitly all the words spoken by the prophet. Nay, he even contends that there are doctrines without the creed of Islam which are worthy of regard. He holds in some strange way that the knowledge of Allah can be obtained in Nature."

Such accounts, instead of discouraging the lad, only served to fan the flame of his curiosity. He endeavoured to obtain all possible information concerning Abdallah's dwelling-place, and when he had with difficulty elicited some vague particulars, he set out to find the ruined castle, inhabited by the holy man. In this old castle, remote from men, Abdallah had found a refuge from the persecution of the fanatical party, who hated him virulently. Nor would he have been safe here, had not the castle fortunately the evil reputation of being haunted by the spirits of the ancient pagans, so that none of the faithful dared approach its walls. Nay, they would not even pronounce its name, so great was its supposed noxious influence; and had the building not been a conspicuous object, it is likely Hadschi Wekkes would never have found it, for he dared not ask any wanderer to direct him. The approaches were all overgrown with underwood and creeping plants, the place had, in very truth, a plague-stricken, spectral aspect.

Undeterred by these obstacles, the lad pushed on, and soon neared an open space, where, under the shade of a tall tree, sat an old man of cheerful mien. When he caught sight of Hadschi Wekkes, he greeted him.

"Thou must be no ordinary youth," he

said, "to brave the prejudice which deems everyone a heretic who crosses this threshold. As thou carriest no tools, I infer thou comest not to seek the treasures which fools say are guarded by demons. Mere curiosity would lead no one to brave the contempt of his fellows. Therefore I scarcely err in deeming that thou comest in quest of me."

"It is so, in truth," answered Hadschi Wekkes, and he proceeded to explain the object of his pilgrimage.

The old man professed his readiness to impart his knowledge, but warned the lad that this was meagre. He consented to remain in the sage's home, to imbibe his wisdom, and read with him out of the great open book. This reading was no sentimental worship of the kind practised by Jean Jacques Rousseau; it rather resembled the teaching of Mill. Abdallah simply observed the laws and workings of Nature, and drew practical conclusions, with regard to God and man, from the phenomena passing before his eyes. He held Nature as neither wholly evil nor wholly good.

Hadschi Wekkes, in his account to Maltzan, thus condensed Abdallah's doctrines:

"When I began to understand what the old man meant by Nature, I begged him to tell me his views about men. Are men good or bad by nature? I wished to know."

"What is good?" asked Abdallah, "and what is bad? These terms are not cognate in all places and ages. Theologians define the good as in conformity with the laws of God; evil as that which is contrary to them. But the so-called commands of God are different in every creed. Now, I say that everything is good which is beneficial to all human beings, and even theologians have been obliged to reckon benevolence and mercy as undoubted virtues. Formerly this was otherwise. Before the time of Moses, Christ, and Mahomet, there were religions that knew no 'good,' save the strict observance of rites and ceremonies. Good and bad were terms only associated with human laws. Whatever conducted to the welfare of man, as a social being, was pronounced good. The more people lived together in families or communities, the more complicated grew the ideas of good and bad. I have assured myself that man, in the so-called state of Nature, knows nothing of such ideas. I once conversed with a negro

chieftain, who was in the habit of selling his subjects as slaves, or of killing them without any fault on their part. I explained to him that it was wrong to do harm to one's fellow-creatures. 'If so,' he replied, 'the weak and cowardly are the only good people; they hurt no one because they dare not. He who has power and courage does what he likes.' Neither is everything in Nature good, as we understand the term. I will teach you that in action, you must wait till the Monsun (rainy season)."

"I was obliged," continued Hadschi Wekkes, "to wait for the rest of my lesson till the Monsun. When it had come, Abdallah led me to a rocky prominence, whence we could overlook a large meadow. I here beheld a strange scene. The whole area was occupied by flocks of migratory birds, who assembled annually, at this season, before beginning their pilgrimage to other climes. Suddenly some of these birds rose up from the ground, and flying with full force against one of their comrades, proceeded to pierce him with their sharp beaks."

"Those are the old and weakly, who cannot join in the flight," explained Abdallah, "because they have grown unfit, the younger kill them. It is a necessity of Nature; but I ask, is the Nature that causes this necessity good? I mean good in the human sense of the term, when it forces one animal to kill another of its own kind?"

"I concluded that, in asking me this question, which I could but answer in the negative, Abdallah did not wish to contend that Nature was bad, but only that our human ideas of bad and good are not applicable to her. He nodded assent when I told him my thoughts."

"Our ideas," he said, "are derived from our own narrow personality, while Nature is impersonal. One animal is nourished by another, one plant overgrows and kills its fellow. All this would be wrong judged by our human standard. And it is little different with men in an uncivilised state. Let me relate to you some of my experiences. I have not always lived in solitude. When I was young I travelled the length of Arabia, and crossed the sea of Jemen (the Red Sea) till I came to the coasts of the black men. The first tribes I visited were Mahometans, like to ourselves. They had not long been converted, and many an old man among them remembered the days when they were

heathens. They told me how they had been ignorant of such ideas as God, Right, and Wrong. At the time I could hardly credit this assertion, but later, I came upon a people amongst whom I still found such a state of ethic ignorance. The powerful only enjoyed property and freedom, while the weak suffered every conceivable evil. Once I found the whole tribe in a state of jubilation, because a hostile attack was in preparation against a neighbouring tribe, and they felt assured of easy victory. Why, I asked? It then appeared that they had always been friendly with this people, which, however, had just been weakened in numbers and force by an epidemic, and now that it was weak, was regarded as an enemy. This war was nothing else but a horrible hunt. The attacked, many of whom were still suffering, fell like flies under the spears of their assailants. The whole tribe was exterminated, and why? Partly from sheer love of murder, partly for the acquisition of their lands. Is this vastly different to what the animals do, when they eat one another, or exclude each other from fertile spots?"

The preaching of Abdallah was that of the purest Humanity. He disbelieved the innate goodness of man, and therefore rated the benefits of civilisation very highly, not losing sight, however, of its attendant evils. His life of solitude was not led from choice or misanthropy, but had been forced upon him.

"My shoulders are old," he said to his pupil, "they can no longer bear the persecutions of the theologians. You are young, and have strong young shoulders; you must go out into the world, and live among men. Be more cautious than your master, who has often spoken too much at a time. Teach the truth grain by grain; no matter how slowly you instil, so long as you but teach it, for it is high time our country should arouse from her death-like sleep of empty formalism, from the theology which kills the intellect, and extracts nothing from the Koran, save lifeless words."

Hadschi Wekkes grew up to manhood under Abdallah's care, and was nurtured on his doctrines. When his master deemed him fully educated, he commanded him to depart from Mount Sabber, that he might preach his creed in the wide world. Hadschi obeyed. He wandered through many lands, preaching his gospel, first timidly, then more boldly. At first

he met with little success, and much persecution from the Kadis and Muftis. His doctrines, which, in their main bearings, resemble the enlightened rationalism with which Europeans are familiar, sounded astonishing and subversive to oriental ears. The innate superstitiousness of these people is opposed to such belief, while their theologians repress it from interested motives. No wonder, therefore, that Hadschi Wekkes suffered much oppression; but he preached on nevertheless, though many and many a time he was detained, and forced to undergo an examination before the religious judge. One such examination he relates in this wise:

"What," asked the Mufti, "do you believe of Allah?"

"I believe," answered Hadschi Wekkes, "that he is the great Incomprehensible."

The Mufti was obliged to be satisfied with this reply, for this is one of the many terms permitted to a Mussulman in enumerating the attributes of the Divine Being.

"What do you believe about the angels?"

"I believe that they are invisible."

This too was orthodox, but it did not please the Mufti, for it sounded a little as if the cause of their invisibility was their non-existence.

"And what do you think of the fasts?" he questioned further.

"To fast is good both for body and soul, since the stomach rests, and the mind's action is not overclouded with food."

This reply was also not what the Mufti wished to know; he did not care for the hygienic aspect of the question. He continued his queries, but the answers he obtained from Hadschi Wekkes afforded no ground for the imputation of heterodoxy, while they gave no satisfactory proof of orthodoxy. He therefore had to dismiss the prisoner, and thus it happened on every similar occasion Hadschi Wekkes eluded the theologians by such evasive replies. Their antipathy consequently increased, while their various persecutions hindered the spread of his work. After much consideration the reformer determined on a medium course. He resolved to found two religions, of exoteric and esoteric form. Enwrapping the former with familiar Arabian phraseologies, of a mystic nature, he only revealed the true unvarnished faith to such as he deemed fitted to receive the truth, according to



the observations he had made of their mental capacities, while imbibing the exoteric form. His genuine doctrine was too simple to appeal readily to an imaginative Eastern mind.

In this wise he founded little congregations throughout all Arabia. His work bore good fruit in the shape of tolerance and enlightenment; and though the progress was slow, and often disheartening, Wekkes laboured on with perseverance and faith. He is still living, but he has reached the evening of life, his strength is failing, and he fears his mission work is nearly ended. Only quite recently did he escape with bare life from the bitter rancour of his enemies. Maltzan describes him as a veteran of noble mien, his well-cut features have a spiritual aspect, his face is alive with mind, he possesses a mercurial vivacity of movement and intellect, and while endowed with deep poetic feeling, is totally free from all sentimentalism or self-consciousness. He shows a keen interest in all European concerns, and has an intelligent comprehension for all our social reforms, while he condemns in unmeasured terms the hollow varnish of occidental civilisation, which the Khedive is spreading over Egypt, regardless of the utter ignorance it covers.

It would be of extreme interest if, of the many travellers through Aden, some of the intelligent and Arab-speaking would visit this reformer, and give to the world further accounts of his great work, since we may look for no more from Maltzan, whose pen has been taken from his grasp by the relentless hand of Death.

## A CHARMING FELLOW.

BY FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE.

AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE," "MABEL'S PROGRESS," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER LX.

THE next day medical evidence was forthcoming as to the insanity of David Powell, who had been removed to the County Asylum. Testimony was, moreover, given by many persons showing that the preacher's mind had long been disordered. Even the widow Thimbleby's evidence, given with many tears, went to prove that. But she tried with all her might to bear witness to his goodness, and clung loyally to her loving admiration for his character. "He may not be quite in his right senses for matters of this world," sobbed the poor

woman, "and he has been sorely tormented by taking up with these doctrines of election. But if ever there was an angel sent down to suffer on this earth, and help the sorrowful, and call sinners to repentance, Mr. Powell is that angel. I know what he is. And I have had other lodgers—good, kind gentlemen, too; I don't say to the contrary. But overboil their eggs in the morning, or leave a lump in their feather-bed, and you'd soon get a glimpse of the old Adam. Now with Mr. Powell, nothing put him out except sin; and even that did but make him the more eager to save your soul."

Several witnesses who had testified on the previous day were re-examined. And some new ones were found who swore to having met Mr. Errington going along the road from his own house towards Whitford in great agitation, and asking everyone he met if they had seen his wife. The hour was such that to the best of their belief it was impossible he should have had such an interview as Powell described, with the deceased, between the time at which the cook swore he left his own house and their meeting him in the road. On this point, however, the evidence was somewhat conflicting. But the Whitford clocks were well known to be conflicting also; St. Mary's being always foremost with its jangling bell, the Town Hall clock coming next—except occasionally, when it hastened to be first with apparently quite capricious zeal—and the mellow chimes of St. Chad's, that were heard far over town and meadow, closing the chorus with their sweet cadence.

There certainly appeared to be no cause, no conceivable motive for Algernon Errington to have committed the crime. Many witnesses combined to show with what sweetness and good-humour he bore his wife's jealous tempers. And, besides, it was notorious that he had hoped through her influence to obtain assistance and promotion from her uncle, Lord Seely. Whereas, on the other hand, there did seem to be several motives at work to induce the unfortunate lady to put an end to her own existence. There could be little doubt that she had committed the post-office robberies, and the fear of detection had weighed on her mind. Moreover, that she had for some time past been made unhappy by jealousy and discontent, and had contemplated making away with herself, was proved by several scraps of writing besides that which her

husband had found, and produced at the inquest the first day. In brief, no one was surprised when the foreman of the coroner's jury delivered a verdict to the effect that the deceased lady had committed suicide while under the influence of temporary insanity; and added a few words stating the opinion of the jury that Mr. Algernon Errington's character was quite unstained by the accusation of a maniac, who had been proved to have been subject to insane delusions for some time past. It was just the sort of verdict that every one had expected, and the general sympathy with Algernon still ran high.

As for him, he got away from the Blue Bell as quickly as possible after the inquest was over, slipping away by a back door where a close fly was waiting for him. When he reached his home he locked himself into the dining-room, and sat down on the sofa with closed eyes, and his body leaning listlessly against the cushions, as if all vital force were gone from him. The prevailing, and, for a time, the only sensation he felt was one of utter weariness. He was so completely exhausted that the restful attitude, the silence, and the solitude seemed positive luxuries. He was scarcely conscious of his escape. He felt merely that the strain was over, and that voice, face, and limbs might sink back from the terrible tension he had held them in to a natural lassitude.

But by-and-by he began to realise the danger he had passed, and to exult in his new sense of freedom. Castalia being removed, it seemed as if all troubles must be removed with her!

The funeral of Mrs. Algernon Errington was to take place on the following day, and it was known that Lord Seely would be present at it, if it were possible for him to make the journey from London. It was said that he had been very ill, but was now better, and would use his utmost endeavours to pay that mark of respect to his niece's memory. Mrs. Errington, indeed, talked of my lord's coming as a proof of his sympathy with her boy. But the world knew better than that. It knew, by some mysterious means, that Lord Seely had quarrelled with Algernon. And when his lordship did appear in Whitford, and took up his quarters at the Blue Bell, rumours went about to the effect that he had refused to see young Errington, and had remained shut up in his own room, attended by his physician. This, however,

was not true. Lord Seely had seen Algernon and spoken with him. But he had not touched his proffered hand; he had said no word to him of sympathy; he had barely looked at him. The poor old man was overpowered by grief for Castalia, and it was in vain for Algernon to put on a show of grief. About a matter of fact Lord Seely would even now have found it difficult to think that Algernon was telling him a point-blank lie; but on a matter of feeling it was different. Algernon's words and voice rang false and hollow, and the old man shrank from him.

Lord Seely had come down to Whitford on getting the news of Castalia's terrible death, without knowing any particulars about it. Those were not the days when the telegraph brought a budget of intelligence from the most distant parts of the earth every morning. A few hurried and confused lines were all that Lord Seely had received, but they were sufficient to make him insist on performing the journey to Whitford at once. Lady Seely had tried to impress on him the necessity of shaking off young Errington now that Castalia was gone. "Wash your hands of him, Valentine," my lady had said. "If poor Cassy has done this desperate deed, it's he that drove her to it—smooth-faced young villain!" To all this Lord Seely had made no reply. But in his own mind he had almost resolved to help Algernon to a place abroad. It was what poor Castalia would have desired.

But, then, after his arrival in Whitford all the painful details of the coroner's inquest were made known to him. He made inquiries in all directions, and learned a great deal about his niece's life in the little town. The prominent feelings in his mind were pity and remorse. Pity for Castalia's unhappy fate, and acute remorse for having been so weak as to let her marriage take place without any attempt to interfere, despite his own secret conviction that it was an ill-assorted and ill-omened one. "You couldn't have helped it, my lord," said the friendly physician, to whom he poured out some of the feelings that oppressed his heart. "Perhaps not, perhaps not. But I ought to have tried. My poor, dear, unhappy girl!"

On the day of the funeral Lord Seely stood side by side with Algernon at Castalia's grave, in Duckwell churchyard. But, when it was over, they parted, and drove back to Whitford in separate carriages. Lord Seely was to return to London early

the next morning, but, before he went away, determined to pay a visit to the county lunatic asylum, and see David Powell.

On the day of the funeral Algernon had spoken a few words to Lord Seely about his wish to get away from the painful associations which must henceforward haunt him in Whitford, and had reminded his lordship of the promise made in London. But Lord Seely had made no definite answer, and, moreover, he had said that, by his doctor's advice, he must decline a visit which Algernon offered to make him that evening. Was the "pompous little ass" going to throw him over after all?

In the course of that afternoon he heard that old Maxfield intended to come down on him, pitilessly, for the full amount of the bills he held. A reaction had set in in public sentiment. Tradesmen, who could not get paid, and whose hope of eventual payment were greatly damped by the coolness of Lord Seely's behaviour to his nephew-in-law, began to feel their indignation once more override their compassion. The two servants at Ivy Lodge asked for their wages, and declared that they did not wish to remain there another week. Algernon's position at the post-office was forfeited. He knew that he could not keep it, even if he would.

It began to appear that the removal of Castalia had not, after all, removed all troubles from her husband's path!

But the heaviest blow of all was to come.

Lord Seely left Whitford without seeing him again, and sent back unopened a note, which Algernon had written, begging for an interview, with these words written outside the cover in a trembling hand: "Dare not to write to me, or importune me more."

Algernon received this late at night; and before noon the next day the fact was known all over Whitford. People began to say that Lord Seely had obtained access to David Powell, had spoken with him, and had gone away convinced of the substantial truth of his testimony; that his lordship had left orders that Powell should lack no comfort or attention which his unhappy state permitted of his enjoying; and that he had strongly expressed his grateful sense of the poor preacher's efforts to save his niece.

From London, Lord Seely—who had heard that Miss Bodkin had visited Duckwell Farm while his niece lay dead there, and had placed flowers on her unconscious

breast—sent a mourning-ring and a letter, the contents of which Minnie communicated to no one but her parents. Nevertheless, its contents were discussed pretty widely, and were said to be of a nature very damnatory to Algernon Errington's character. However, the painful things that were said in Whitford could not hurt him, for he had gone—disappeared in the night, like a thief, as his creditors said—and no one could say whither.

#### CHAPTER LXI. CONCLUSION.

OUR tale is almost told. The last words that need saying can be briefly said. When some weeks had passed away, Mrs. Errington received a letter from her son, demanding a remittance to be sent forthwith *Poste Restante* to a little seaport town on the Italian Riviera. He had not during the interval left his mother in absolute ignorance as to what had become of him, but had sent her a few brief lines from London, saying that he had been obliged to leave Whitford in order to escape being put in prison for debt; that his present intention was to go abroad; and that she should hear again from him before long.

Algernon had been so quick in his movements, that he managed to be in town, before the story of Lord Seely's having cast him off had had time to be circulated amongst his acquaintance there. And he was enabled, as the result of his activity, to obtain from Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs and others several letters of introduction calculated to be of use to him abroad. He was described by Mrs. Machyn-Stubbs as a nephew of Lord Seely and her intimate friend, who was travelling on the Continent to recruit his health, after the shock of his wife's sudden death.

He had brought away from Whitford such few jewels belonging to his dead wife as were of any value, and he sold them in London. He furnished himself handsomely with such articles as were desirable for a gentleman of fortune travelling for his pleasure; and allowed the West-end tradesmen, to whom the Honourable John Patrick Price had recommended him during his brilliant London season, to write down against him in their books some very extortionate charges for the same. His outfit being accomplished in this inexpensive manner, he was enabled to travel with as much comfort as was compatible in those days with a journey from London to Calais, and he stepped on to the French shore with a considerable sum of money in his pocket.



For a long time the tidings of him that reached Whitford were uncertain and conflicting; then they began to arrive at even wider and wider intervals; and, finally, after Mrs. Errington left the town, they ceased altogether to reach the general world of Whitfordians. The real history of the circumstances which induced Mrs. Errington to leave the home of so many years was known to very few persons. It was this:

About a twelvemonth after Algernon's departure Mrs. Errington made a sudden journey to London; and, on her return, she confided to her old friend, Dr. Bodkin, that she had sold out of the funds nearly the whole sum from which her little income was derived, and transmitted it to Algy, who had an absolute need for the money, which she considered paramount. "But, my dear soul, you have ruined yourself!" cried the doctor, aghast. "Algernon will repay me, sir," replied the poor old woman, drawing herself up with the ghost of her old Ancram grandeur. The upshot was that Dr. Bodkin, in concert with one or two other old friends of her late husband, made some representations on her behalf to Mr. Filthorpe, the wealthy Bristol merchant, who was, as the reader may remember, a cousin of Dr. Errington; and that Mr. Filthorpe benevolently allowed his cousin's widow a small annuity, which, together with the few pounds that still remained to her of her own, enabled her to live in decent comfort. But she professed herself unable to remain in Whitford, and removed to a cottage in Dorrington, where she had a kind friend in the wife of the head-master of the proprietary school, whom we first presented to the reader as "little Rhoda Maxfield."

Mrs. Diamond (as she was now) lived in a very handsome house, and wore very elegant dresses, and was looked upon as a personage of some importance in Dorrington and its vicinity. Her husband had decidedly opposed a proposition she made to him to receive Mrs. Errington as an inmate of his home. But he put no further constraint on Rhoda's affectionate solicitude about her old friend.

And the two women drove together, and sewed together, and talked together; and their talk was chiefly about that exiled victim of unmerited misfortune, Algernon Errington. Rhoda preserved her faith in the Ancram glories. And although she acknowledged to herself that Algernon had treated her badly, he was invested

in her mind with some mysterious immunity from the obligations that bind ordinary mortals.

A visitor, who was often cordially welcomed at Dorrington by Matthew Diamond, was Miss Chubb. And the kind-hearted little spinster endured a vast amount of snubbing and patronage from her old enemy, Mrs. Errington, on the battle-ground of polite society, with much charitable sweetness.

Old Max lived to see his daughter's first-born child; but he was unable to move from his bed for many months before his death. Perhaps it was the period of quiet reflection thus obtained, when the things of this world were melting away from his grasp, which occasioned the addition of a codicil to the old man's will, that surprised most of his acquaintance. He had settled the bulk of his property on his daughter at her marriage, and, in his original testament, had bequeathed the whole of the residue to her also. But the codicil set forth that his only and beloved daughter being amply provided for, and his son James inheriting the stock, fixtures, and goodwill of his flourishing business, together with the house and furniture, Jonathan Maxfield felt that he was doing injustice to no one by bequeathing the sum of three thousand pounds to Miss Minnie Bodkin as a mark of respect and admiration. And he, moreover, left one hundred pounds, free of duty, to "that God-fearing member of the Wesleyan Society, Richard Gibbs, now living as groom in the service of Orlando Pawkins, Esquire, of Pudcombe Hall;" a bequest which sensibly embittered the flavour of the sermon preached by the un-legacied Brother Jackson on the next Sunday after old Max's funeral.

Dr. Bodkin still lives and rules in Whitford Grammar School. His wife's life is brightened by the sight of her Minnie's increased health and strength. But she has never quite forgiven Matthew Diamond, and has been heard to say that young Mrs. Diamond's children are the most singularly uninteresting she ever saw!

Of Minnie herself, the chronicle hitherto records a life of useful benevolence, undisfigured by ascetic affectation, or the assumption of any pious livery whatever. She keeps her old delight in all the beautiful things of art and nature, and old Max's legacy has enabled her to enjoy some foreign travel. She is still in the

first prime of womanhood, and more beautiful than ever. But, at the latest accounts, poor Mr. Warlock has not been tortured by the spectacle of any successful rival. For his part, he goes on worshipping Miss Bodkin with hopeless fidelity.

For a long time Minnie continued to visit David Powell in the lunatic asylum at stated periods. He generally recognised her, and the sight of her seemed to soothe and comfort him. After a while he was pronounced cured, and left the asylum; but his madness returned on him at intervals, and he would voluntarily go and place himself under restraint, when he felt the black fit coming. He did not live very long, being assailed by a mortal consumption. But as his body wasted, his mind grew clearer, stronger, and more serene; and before his death Minnie had the satisfaction to hear him profess a humble faith in the Divine Goodness, and a fearless confidence in the mysterious hand that was leading him, even as a little child, into the shadowy land. There was as large a concourse of people at his burial, as had ever thronged to hear his fiery preaching on Whit-meadow. His memory became surrounded by a saintly radiance in the imaginations of the poor. Stories of his goodness and his afflictions, and the final ray of peace which God sent to cheer his last moments, were long retailed amongst the Whitford Methodists. And his grave is still bright with carefully-tended flowers.

Of Algernon Errington the strangest rumours were circulated for a time. Some said he had become croupier at a foreign gambling-table; others declared he had married a West Indian heiress with a million of money, and was living in Florence in unheard-of luxury. Others, again, affirmed that they had the best authority for believing that he had gone to the United States, and had appeared on the stage there with immense success. However, the remembrance of him passed away from men's minds in Whitford within a few years; in London within a few months. But it was a long time before Jack Price left off recounting his final interview with Errington. "That young Ancram, you know. Captivating way of his own. What? On my honour, the rascal borrowed ten pounds of me. Ready money, sir, down on the nail! Bedad, it was a tour de force, for I never have a shilling in my pocket for my own use. But Ancram would coax the little birds off the bushes,

as they say in my part of the world. Principle? Oh, devil of a rag of principle in his whole composition. What? I wonder what the deuce has become of him! I give ye my word and honour he was really—really now—a Charming Fellow."

## LEARNING TO COOK;

### A BOARD-SCHOOL LESSON.

IN the schools of Christchurch, Chalton-street, King's-cross, there is established a Cooking-Centre. A twin establishment exists at Blackheath; and beyond this useful pair of metropolitan sisters, cooking-centres (proper) are not.

Now, a cooking-centre is a new combination of words; it is an equally new creation and institution; and it means a place, or kitchen, built especially for the purpose of showing how to cook to a select number of board-school girls, and built in a district, or spot, fairly accessible to a given number of board-schools, sprung up hither and thither round about. The presiding genius of these cooking-centres is a lady from the new Cooking University. She gives her "demonstrations" (that is the technical word) at one centre or the other, by turns, on the proper scholastic days, and she has so large a rotation of girls that it takes a fortnight to get back to girl number one. Deputations of seven or eight scholars each, from five schools, make up her audience daily; and her hours to receive these little people and demonstrate to them are from two to four. A "demonstration" being the very thing to Parisina's mind, at Christchurch Schools, Chalton-street, Parisina presented herself, one afternoon, radiant and expectant, to become, at a first glance, more radiant still.

"Why, look," she exulted, in a discreet whisper, "there is positively a parlour-stove! There's the dust-pan-shape little fire-hole, and narrow little hobs, and all! How capital! Look on the table, too. I can see a nutmeg-grater, and I could buy one like it anywhere for a penny; I can see a penny tin pepper-box; the saucepans are only saucepans, and not wonders of culinary utensils; and—do just see!—the teacher is going to 'demonstrate' upon two sheep's hearts! Besides, that is only a very small bag of flour, half-a-quartern; and that's a very small piece of suet; and those are quite ordinary plates, and cups, and basins; and one out of those three eggs is cracked; and that's a very familiar bag of soda;

and a very familiar basin of dripping; and that's a common salt-box; and there's nothing particular about the paste-board; and—and—in short, I think everything is very solid, and thorough, and satisfactory! Look at the place, too. Ordinary white-washed walls; ordinary wooden mantel-shelf; a proper cupboard; the regular Windsor chairs; some smoke (because that parlour-grate was not lit soon enough); and that general air of woodenness, and brassiness, and straight utility, peculiar to a kitchen. Nothing too grand about any of it, is there?"

No; although it was a bit of a shock to Parisina to see the knuckle-half of an uncooked leg of mutton brought in, followed by a good pair of scales; and although it was more of a shock still, to find, on closer examination, that the long white counter or table was furnished with the academic gas-stove, on which the saucepans were being put to do their duty, instead of upon the little parlour-grate.

"Now, are artisans fed upon legs of mutton?" whispered Parisina, not without indignation. "And are 'lodgings to let' in Battle-bridge here, in Somers-town, in Clare-market, in Bethnal-green, furnished with gas-stoves?"

Parisina's wrath becoming evident, drew forth an explanation.

"I don't do the cooking at the parlour-grate," were the words of the kind lady in command (she shall be called here the Lady Suavia), "because, if I did, I should have to turn my back, and the children could neither see nor hear. We have the gas-stove simply for convenience of demonstration. I told the children, at the very first lesson of their course, that though I should show them nothing but what could be done over a parlour fire, I should be obliged to use the gas, so that they might all see. I was very careful they should understand."

The necessity for this, in Parisina's mind, was fully and generously conceded; and she looked on again, so far assuaged.

"Now, I'm going to roast this half-leg of mutton," said the Lady Suavia, taking hold of it—and she was still in her bonnet, as she had come; she only prepared herself by taking off a mantle, and putting on a bibbed-apron, and a pair of over-sleeves—"I'm going to roast this half-leg of mutton; and though I should have liked to have roasted it at this parlour-grate, the fire is not big enough—it has only just been lit—and I must put it into the gas-

roaster, where it will be cooked exactly the same."

Parisina's sensitiveness was all to the fore again. "There now!" she cried in a discreet whisper. "Another excuse for not cooking by the things the children would have to cook by at home! If it's only because the fire is all smoke and black coal, for what reason upon earth wasn't it lit an hour ago, before the children came?"

Well, it was just one of those hitches that will occur in the movement of all mundane machinery; arising, possibly, from the smallest oversight of the smallest underling, but increasing in the size of it till it becomes everywhere manifest. At Christchurch, most likely, the girl acting as kitchen-maid, had not been punctual; and Time, not having been taken by the fore-lock, was out of arm's-length for ever. Parisina, however, soon saw something that took her to admiration's side once more.

"Now," began the gentle Lady Suavia, "if I were going to roast this mutton by this parlour fire, I should hang it on a jack." She showed a jack, and explained what it was. She further desired that all jacks should be wound up before the joints were hung upon them; to wind afterwards injured the springs. "But," she went on, "if I had no jack, I should take a common hook, like this; and at the end of it I should tie on—just as you see there is tied on—a skein of worsted. Worst, when once turned, will keep on turning, helped by the weight of the meat. But be sure that your skein is worsted. Cotton, or a string, would be of no use."

Good. So were the next points good, equally.

"I am going to weigh my mutton," said the Lady Suavia, "because I have scales here, you see, and I like to be very accurate. If you have no scales, you must just listen to the weight your butcher says when you buy of him, and remember it. Put a screen, too, let me tell you, round your meat when you are roasting it, to keep the draught away. If you have no screen, take a towel-horse or a chair, and put plenty of clothes upon it."

This was showing how to do without three expensive articles of cooking-appliance, and yet how to be quite successful in their absence. Something even better followed, too, in due time.

"I will tell you now," said the Lady



Suavia, "how to roast without a jack at all, and without a dripping-pan, and without an open fire. It is the French way; for the French, you know, have close stoves, not open ranges; and they always roast in the way I want you to learn now."

The two sheep's hearts were the viands under demonstration. After they had been washed, dried, well discoursed upon, and exhibited, and had had their cavities filled up with veal-stuffing—concocted daintily, and from the beginning, before the pupil's eyes—they were simply put into a saucepan, with the accompaniment of a certain (given and very small) quantity of dripping, the lid was put upon them close, and there they were.

"Mind you, they'll want basting," warned the Lady Suavia. "For basting, always have an iron spoon ready, and a plate to put it on; and you'll find I shall baste these every few minutes—whenever I have an opportunity, indeed, as the other cooking goes on."

It was so. Every now and then the lady's neat hand removed the saucepan-lid, filling the class-room with an odour as brave and appetising as any chef could produce in the kitchen of a king, making audible a delicious hissing as the boiling fat she took up in her spoon fell down again upon the meats; but surely no cooking could have given less trouble; no cooking could have caused less outlay for firing and utensil. The cooking seemed all good, too, when it was finished, and the Lady Suavia applied herself to the pleasant task of carving, and a *bonne bouche* of heart was served to every girl to taste. Moreover, a large joint of beef, or a whole leg of mutton, could be roasted in the same way, it was explained. The only essentials would be more dripping (six or eight ounces, perhaps), a larger saucepan (or fish-kettle), and a stronger fire. The right direction had been reached in that item, eminently.

The roast heart had not been sent round to taste without its proper supply of gravy. The preparation of the gravy, in fact, had preceded the hiding away of the half-leg of mutton in the gas-roaster. The knuckle of the leg had been deftly chopped off; the little odd ends of skin or gristle had been cut away; and these had been put into a saucepan with some water, some salt and pepper, and the stalks of the lemon-thyme with which the Lady Suavia had flavoured her veal stuffing. Parisina flushed up with extra strain of

attention, too, when she saw that something was about to be done with a dish of genuine old "scraps" and bones.

"Old bones," proclaimed the Lady Suavia, "can be used again and again. Goodness can be got out of them, till they are as white as these boards. Always keep all your old bits and bones to be boiled up as gravy."

Parisina sank back in her chair, with a fierce sigh. "Gravy!" was her indignant comment. "Gravy! Is gravy food? Is that the only use that 'scraps' can come to?"

The Lady Suavia was dropping a few bones and pieces into her saucepan of mutton-trimmings, and no response could come. There was no further use for the conventional "scraps" at that lesson, it was evident; for the dish was set aside, and we went on to the next subject. To finish up the section "Gravy," however, it is necessary to state that the Lady Suavia did not leave it, when it was ready, without a demonstration how it could be browned.

"To brown gravy," she explained, "gives no goodness to it, and rather spoils the flavour, unless you are very careful; it is only done to give it a rich appearance. There are several ways of browning; onion-skin is one; but I am going to show you how to brown with sugar. I shall take this old iron shovel (an old iron spoon is best; only all mine are new and far too good, it would be a shame to spoil them), and I shall just put this spoonful of sugar on the end of it, so. Now I shall put it in the fire—see—and let it burn, absolutely burn; not till it is a cinder, though, or else it will make the gravy have a disagreeable taste. There, see! It is alight now; and as pretty as snapdragon, isn't it? And now I'll drop it into the saucepan where the other things are, and it will be all done."

The mutton and the hearts, with this gravy and the stuffing, ended the meats and their immediate surroundings for the day; the intervals in their cooking being used for preparing the puddings that are usually eaten with them. These were three: the familiar Yorkshire in the pan, the plain suet, the dumpling, or Norfolk jockey; and each one was taken, right through, from birth to death, or from rise to fall (into the mouths of the little audience), successfully. When the suet was being chopped, the Lady Suavia showed how it could be chopped nearly noiselessly, by taking hold of the point of

the knife with the left hand, and helping it so as on a pivot. When the flour was to be weighed, the Lady Suavia told how a certain spoon held so much weight, so that people could measure that way instead of weighing, if they had no scales; a further note on this subject being that flour is sold by the stone, fourteen pounds, which makes a quarter only three pounds and a half. When bread-crumbs had been wanted to stuff the heart, the Lady Suavia had grated from a genuine "heel" of "household"—wooden and wedge-like enough—exactly of the make that might be thrown away; and the Lady Suavia had explained how this was better than bread that was new, and how it should always be saved to be applied to some good use. When the batter was being stirred, the Lady Suavia desired the hand should always move from right to left. With this right action, the hand, it was declared, might beat batter for a culinary ever, and would never tire. When this made batter was being poured out, thin, into its square pan, the Lady Suavia explained why it should never be made double the thickness, or three times, or more; because, having no real cooking, and only getting heat in the pan, if it were other than a mere shell, or coat, it would never get properly done. When the cloth was wanted for the suet-pudding, too, the Lady Suavia recommended that it should always be dipped in boiling-water before being used; in case it had been washed with soap or soda, and the taste of these should spoil the real materials, and for other reasons do no good. And besides these speeches, every one of which had suitable demonstration, there was a regular net-work of speech running here and there, in every rest and stay, filling up the needful pause for roast or boil, and always keeping the scholars' note-books active, and their wits alive.

"Now what," asked the Lady Suavia, one time, "did I tell you, at your last lesson, were the three essentials for good cooking?"

There was an eager shout of words from the nest of thirty or forty girls, as they sat, head above head, in their neat gallery. Distinguishable in the midst of it was the good noun, "Punctuality."

"Punctuality? Yes," said the Lady Suavia. "But I didn't begin with punctuality, did I? The three essentials are cleanliness, punctuality, and economy; and, left to myself, I should begin first with cleanliness. I should wash my

hands, and all the things I was going to use, shouldn't I?"

The girls looked down abashed, making that confession to Lady Suavia.

"I think I told you," she asked presently, "the six most usual modes of cooking. It is some days since I told you, but can you remember?"

The eager rush of words was repeated. The pupils were equal to the occasion. The six usual modes stood—roasting, boiling, stewing, frying, baking, broiling.

"Yes, that is right," commended the Lady Suavia, running over the six modes again in her quiet mild way.

"Now, to help you to remember them, I want to give to each a characteristic. Listen, now; for I shall ask it you again, another day, I daresay. Roasting is the most savoury—the nice frothed outside and rich brown gravy make it so; stewing is the most nutritious, for all the juices of the meat are kept in, and no particle is wasted; boiling is the easiest, you have but to put everything into a pot and let it stay there; baking is the most wasteful; frying is the quickest; and broiling the most difficult."

Parisina had a word to put in about the despatch of frying. "There!" she whispered. "Do you hear that downright honest reason why the poor are so wedded to the frying-pan? Where time is money, it is a primal requisite that time should be cut short. In other matters, it seems to me, mankind condones a little waste, if speed makes up for it. Is an artisan housewife, getting the nearest way to a point, never to have the need recognised, but always to get a scolding?"

She was hushed; for other questions were upon the Lady Suavia's tongue, and being answered.

"There are some roast meats we put a stuffing to, are there not?" was an inquiry.

"Yes!" the young Board-scholars shouted, helped to their quick affirmation by savoury memories of the stuffed heart just gone down.

"And what, pray, are they? Can you tell me?"

"Hearts! Pork! Veal! Fowls!" These came, with promptitude and precision.

Then, slower, with more deliberation, "Ducks. Turkeys. Pheasants."

"And any more?"—since there was here a puzzled stop.

"Geese!"

It was the essay of a shrill pupil; and at it there was a smile in the mild eye of the Lady Suavia, and a laugh that went swiftly round.

"Well!" when there was opportunity once more; "do you remember what I told you last lesson about babies' food, and how to make it?"

Voices went up briskly, and hands to match, in national-school fashion; and it was understood that this matter was remembered thoroughly.

"I told you, did I not," said the Lady Suavia, "that it was not good to make babies' food of bread, because of the yeast and the fermentation which goes on when the little babies have swallowed it. Then I said it was not well to feed babies on rusks, because of——?"

"The butter and the sugar!"—in a confident roar.

"The butter and the sugar. Right. For they are not suited to the digestive powers of a baby, either. Well, then, I said the best thing for the food was——?"

"Flour!"

"Flour. And the flour was to be baked——?"

"Oh no!"

Ah, but that was wrong; for the flour was to be baked; and it was to be baked in a given way, and for a given time; and then was to be made ready for administration. This last led up to another point.

"Then, how are we to mix the flour? Can you tell me? In water? milk?"

"Milk!"

Wrong again. In the flour itself, our young scholars were requested to recollect, there were all the qualities necessary for subsistence, and if milk were added to it, it would be too heavy, and disagree. Milk alone, also, was quite enough without any thickening (unless, at a certain stage of babyhood, a thickening of farines, like rice and semolina, which only yield warmth, not flesh), for milk, again, contains every requisite to nourish the human body, and would keep life up without any help whatever.

"But there are others, besides babies, for whom milk is good. Can you tell me?"

"Pusses!"

The same shrill maiden who had been over-prominent before, it must have been; though, in the titter and the quick call back to order, it was impossible to do more than give a smile and a surmise.

"Look at me, now, please," had said the Lady Suavia, at one of the earliest

"demonstrations;" "I am going to chop up——?"

"Parsley!"

"Yes; parsley for my stuffing. Write parsley in your books: p, a, r, s, l, e, y, is the way to spell it. Take the stalks off your parsley always; they are too bitter; then chop it—without any noise, you hear—just as I told you about the suet; and now I am going to add to the parsley this little bit of lemon-thyme. Remember, a very little flavouring is wanted for things; a ha'porth of lemon-thyme, carefully used, will flavour three or four cookings for you; and I only want you to use the leaves of this, recollect. Just pick and pull them off, like this. The stalks are woodeny and strong; but I shall put them into the gravy saucepan, so, and then we shall get the flavour, and can take the wood out and throw it away."

Now, there will be ready acknowledgment of the good tendency of such teaching as this; ready acknowledgment, also, of the fact that cooking-ground was at last being occupied in real and sensible fashion. Under the pleasant conviction, Parisina's hedge-hog quills were being pulled out, one by one, and she was pleasantly developing into as sleek a dormouse as ever slept. Truth to say, it was impossible to continue to be very irate in the presence of the painstaking Lady Suavia. There was a tenderness with her, a gentle earnestness, a conscientious mastery of her subject, and a thorough carrying it out, that quelled all animosity, and compelled consideration and sympathy to take its place instead. With her to point out and expound, it was as clear as daylight why she must have had a second stove, even had she cooked her leg of mutton and her Norfolk jockeys, say, at the parlour fire. How else could she have "taken" gravy also, and suet-pudding, and French roast heart? There would have been no room to show the five dishes at once, and make the lesson as valuable as it was. With the Lady Suavia, again, to give the "demonstration," it was easy to see the obstacles to the girls cooking for themselves; the shoals of implements it would require, the scores of fires, the cart-load of materials, the mighty addition to expenses, and corresponding call upon the rates. With the Lady Suavia, moreover, and pre-eminently, to give the "demonstration," did she not "demonstrate" with clearness and from the very beginning? a showing-how being, perforce, the first step



for a child: and this showing-how being accompanied by a request that each child should try for herself at home? In addition to this it required no effort to comprehend the narrow limit of government hours; forty, only, for the whole year; stamping the lessons down into twenty, of two hours each. And in a two-hours' lesson, it must be remembered, several minutes get rubbed out; counting the needful intervals, and the discipline that must be observed at the outset and at the end. At Christchurch, for example, the Lady Suavia, on entrance, had to call the scholars' names, and the scholars had to answer; on departure, the monitors of each attending school had to leave a book, and give and take some few directions; in the course of the lesson all "demonstration" was stayed, because Norfolk jockeys were being eaten, and hot roast mutton, and sheep's heart, with knobs of savoury stuffing. But, with all the drawbacks, we were clearly on the right path, and had assisted at a cooking lesson that was real and indisputably useful.

As for the moral influence of simple contact of Board-school girls with such a lady as the Lady Suavia, it is immense. Parisina had her own mode of leaping into being assured of this, which shall be related. Leaving Christchurch precincts, on the conclusion of the lesson, she (Modesta with her) hustled against a deputation of girls, wending their way, in the dusk's damp and gloom, to their distant schools. In spite of Modesta's deprecating hold, Parisina would fall in, and speak.

"Was it you, Alice, I heard whisper, in the school, that had made some porridge?"

Parisina had picked up this merry little creature's designation an hour or more before. The dancing eyes of her, and chattering mouth, had drawn down the monitor's reproof, and made her notable.

But Alice, under a personal encounter, was self-enunciative no more; became shy; and stammered out a repudiation of the porridge manufacture, with blushes and low voice.

"Have you made anything, then?" Parisina was pursuing.

"Yes."

"What?"

"I poached an egg!"

"Well!" and Parisina turned from the hung head to a scholar in the front of the file, a little older, "have you cooked anything that you have seen?"

"Yes; last week I did. I took the porridge."

"And was it good?"

"Mother said so! And—and——"

"Well? Go on?"

"I gave some to my little brother!"

A smile. And another smile when it was told that the little brother liked it, and that the little cook liked it, and that it was a case of liking altogether. And then the point was reached that had especial and emphatic reference to the Lady Suavia.

"Well, and do you like the lady who is teaching you all these things?"

"Oh yes! And she seems an educated lady, too, I think!"

Parisina's enjoyment was almost audible. "Indeed? Educated, eh? And how do you tell?"

"Oh, because she speaks so nicely, and explains things to you, and tells you how to spell!"

It was not bad for a little Board-school critic, aged twelve, about, was it? For a little waif, or stray, swept by a new Act of Parliament into a mesh of education, from which she was to emerge extra-glossed and polished? Yet this may be an instance of intellectual influence, possibly? not moral, after all? Be that as it may, it made a sentiment come from Parisina, as the cooking-deputation was bid adieu to, and quicker steps left it well behind.

"Dear me!" it was. "If these little creatures are to be kept the hindmost, it behoves a stricter setting the house in order for those who desire to remain in the van! Doesn't it?"

A reflection, true, indisputably; and that may be salutary.

#### KEANE MALCOMBE'S PUPIL.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

DONALD FORSYTHE has been more than two months at Abbeylands.

Spring has grown to summer—summer when she is fair and young, and the first freshness has not died away from her chaplet of leaves.

Very sweet is the early summer; the first roses of the year bloom at our window, and push their perfumed faces in to look at us when we give them the chance. And a summer of happiness is in my heart—happiness that has as yet no name for me, but that holds a thrill of fear!

I do not go so often now along the Long-lane and over the stile, but Donald amply makes up for all deficiencies on my

part, as hardly a day passes that does not bring him to Whitegates. He is but little changed from the boy pictured in his mother's room; a dark moustache shades the smiling mouth, and he towers above poor little me like a young giant. Otherwise there is little difference between the boy and the man, and the same sunny light is in the dark grey eyes as of old.

How ridiculous it seems to me now to think that a time was when there was no such thing as listening for the sound of the gate-latch, and the quick step up the avenue! There lies all the difference of mere existence, and life lived to the full; between that time and this! What a flavourless sort of thing must each day have been when there was no bright face to look in at the low window where Aunt Janet and I sit in our morning-room at work—no figure, grey-coated and slim, to lean its arms on the sill, and, cap in hand, beg the mistress of Whitegates to pardon the iniquity of a fragrant cigar! How absurd to think of a world without such happy incidents! Why one might as well talk of life being lived in the enchanted castle, before the prince came to waken the sleeping beauty. But Whitegates—dear old-fashioned Whitegates—is no castle, and I am no beauty; so this simile is poor.

I took no thought of whither the path I was taking would lead me. I had no aim, no end, no design—I was like a swimmer floating dreamily along a stream, that sees not the falls he is nearing. It was left for the hand of simple Nannie to take the veil from before my eyes.

"I'm right proud and happy, Miss Mabel," she said one day, her broad freckled face all aglow with delight, "to hear the village say ye'll be the leddy o' the big house yet."

I do not answer at once, and Nannie grows afraid that she has angered me. Her hands shake as she folds and unfolds a shawl lying on my bed; and in a less gleesome voice she adds:

"You're not angry with old Nannie, are ye, Miss Mabel, dear?"

"No; I'm not angry. But don't go gossiping down in the village again."

With a grieved, questioning look at me, she leaves the room, and softly closes the door. My heart is laid bare enough to me now. This strange light that has gleamed out upon my life, till every hour glistens like a dewdrop in the sunshine—is—love! The love that I have read about, and thought about, but never yet known—the

best treasure one human heart can bestow upon another.

And yet I might have known how it was with me, when first the day grew to seem so long and aimless, on which I did not see him. I might have known the name of the new glamour that was over me, when, hour after hour, I was content to sit in the wide window-seat, with busy fingers and absent thoughts, and many a glance down the lane, where I could see the well-known figure ever so far away, and count with a heart-throb every step that brought him nearer to me.

I knew it all so well—the click of the gate, the quick step up the low broad stairs, the light tap at the door, and then the bright face smiling down upon me, and the long close clasp of the strong hand, as I stood there trying my best to look as if I had not been "watching and waiting."

Like the faint, sweet scent of dead flowers, the thought of those precious hours come back to me now—the memory of that one summer, when I lived my life intensely, and fancied every bird, and tree, and flower in some strange way were part of my own happiness!

Yet I had never hitherto put together in my mind those four letters that form "love"—never till now, when Nannie tells me what the people say, and these words find an echo in my own heart.

"Donald's wife! Donald's wife!" I can hardly think clearly, for the sound of some voice whispering this over and over again in my ear. I do not think I am naturally a vain woman—perhaps because I have had so little temptation in that way; but now I fasten back the curtain from my window, so that a clear light may fall upon my face, I lean my arms upon the table, and gaze steadily at the reflection in my glass.

There is no beauty!

Great eyes full of a strange radiance look back at me, but all else besides is too insignificant for comment.

Yet I glory in my white slender hands, a heritage from my English father. I caress them one with the other; I hold them up to the glass; I laugh with joy to think that they are fair for Donald. They would not be such a prize to a pretty woman as they are to me, pale-faced, insignificant thing that I am!

But graver thoughts come over me; not doubts of Donald's love—that can never be now, for Nannie's words are like a key that enables me to read what was an unknown tongue before. I know that he is wonder-

ing when he shall see me again, just as I am wondering when I shall see him.

The grave thoughts that come are those of a terrible responsibility laid upon my shoulders—thus having Donald's happiness in my keeping. I am afraid of not proving worthy of such a task. I think of his mother, and feel that she must have made her son fastidious almost to a fault as to how a woman speaks, and acts, and thinks. As Mrs. Forsythe comes to my mind, I feel a strange dismay when I remember that I have somewhat neglected that dear friend of late; and, more than that, I call to mind that there is some change in her—a greater sadness than there was two months ago; and I think that my own happiness has made me selfish, and I have not sought to find out what this additional sadness may be. I do not at this time connect it with Donald's love for me; I fancy, on the contrary, that my love for her son, and his for me, will help to clear it away from the dear, beautiful face; and I build little castles as to all we shall do some day, to try and drive all sad memories from her life.

I think this word "we" with such a delicious sense of pride, that I almost feel as if I were a tall woman.

Then the grave thoughts came again, and the self-distrust that is ever born of a great love possesses me.

What would become of me if ever a cloud came over that bright face I love? How should I bear to see an angry, or, still worse, a pained look in the eyes that now follow me with such a watchful tenderness?

My master's teaching has not been in vain. I kneel beside my bed, and from a humble, grateful heart pray that Heaven will grant me grace to be a loving, true, and faithful wife to Donald Forsythe.

It is now a day or two since Nannie's communication has given me so much food for thought. Aunt Janet and I sit at work in the morning-room. They are cutting the large grass-field at the side of the house; the window is open, and the mower whetting his scythe makes pleasant music for us.

"Click-click" go Aunt Janet's knitting-needles, and every now and then she looks anxiously over her spectacles at me, deftly making for her that most important article of attire, a best cap.

"You've got the border quite a quarter of an inch deeper than the pattern," she says; "measure it now and you'll find

I'm right. There, it's more than the quarter inch, and you're snipping the ribbon ends on to the carpet. Pick them up, child. There's no litter so bad as that which clings under the broom, and Nannie might go over the floor half-a-dozen times without gathering such like snippings. Put your best work and taste in that cap, for when Mrs. Vandaleur comes back to The Cottage, there'll be gay doings you may be sure, and I must be prepared. You'll need a new gown yourself, child, this summer."

Dress is not a failing of mine; indeed, my opportunities that way have been limited; for we have only one draper in our benighted village, and he is but half a draper, being a grocer and general dealer on the other side of his shop. However, I look with complacency on Aunt Janet's idea of a new gown, and I make up my mind that it shall be procured at the large town some miles distant, which is in our eyes an emporium of fashion, and that it shall be a delicate grey, with a soft satin stripe; also, that there shall be a new bonnet, with pale pink roses. What further details of toilette I might have proceeded to go into is hard to say; but Aunt Janet brings me "up by the round turn" by her next words.

"As you told me Mistress Forsythe was laid by with a cold, I just stepped in to call for her this morning while I was out; she's not herself yet, and seems down-like, as you may say. She tells me there's a friend of the boy Donald's, a young lord that was with him at the University in foreign parts, coming to stay at Abbeylands; and it's a good thing, too, to think the laddie will have company of his own years."

Of course I am delighted that Donald's friend is coming—very much delighted indeed—nothing could be pleasanter for him. All the same, I don't believe he's been dull, not even the least bit in the world. But my train of thought is broken by a little horrified shriek from Aunt Janet.

"Why, Mabel, child, if you're not sewing that bow on the inside my cap! Whatever is the lassie about?"

In dire confusion I hasten to unsew the knot of violet ribbon with which I have been gravely ornamenting the interior of the best cap, and bless Nannie for coming in most opportunely "on household cares intent."

She desires the presence of "the mistress" in the kitchen, and meanly taking advantage of that lady's absence, I fling



down the cap upon the table, leaving the bow hanging uncomfortably half in, half out; dart up the stairs into my own room; don my cape and hat; and before Aunt Janet and Nannie have finished their household conference, am away across the big field, where the new-cut grass smells fresh and dewy, and the mowers touch their caps to me as I pass. Then I go through a gateway, and down a shady path, where the trees almost meet over head. I am making my way towards the river, thinking as I go, sauntering slowly along, how charming it will be for Donald Forsythe to have his friend the young lord at Abbeylands. Of course they will go fishing all day (our river is a celebrity in that line), and what could be nicer for them?

Here the sound of someone whistling in the distance makes my heart go at a ridiculous pace, and I feel two burning spots set themselves alight on my cheeks. In a few moments a tall grey figure comes leaping over the fence, descends to earth just in my pathway, and there stands Donald before me, bareheaded as before a queen! handsome, winsome, laughing Donald, just the very fairest, dearest thing earth holds for me!

"Where are you running away to?" he says, perching his glengarry on his curly locks again. "I went to Whitegates to find you, and there was Miss Fraser all alone, looking despairingly at a head-dress—bonnet—cap—what do you call it?—I mean the sort of thing she wears upon her head, you know—and 'Donald,' she said, 'do you know where that daft lassie's gone to?'"

The two burning spots are still alight, and I am rather at a loss to explain my sudden flight, so I give some transparently lame explanation of my conduct, and then we walk slowly on side by side, with superb disregard of Aunt Janet and the neglected head-gear!

I am not by any means sure our conversation is intellectual: I am quite sure it would have been uninteresting to a third party, but it is very pleasant; and soon the least bit in the world of a rise in the ground gives Donald an excuse to make me lean upon his arm, "up the hill, you know," and when the "hill" is surmounted, I forget to withdraw my hand—which is gloveless, and lies snugly on the grey coat-sleeve. Then the conversation flags, and the river, which we are nearing, takes it up, and sings—sings—

sings a sweet, low, joyous murmur of content!

Suddenly Donald stops short, takes both my hands in his, and turns me round so that he can look full into my face.

What he reads there I cannot tell, perhaps just what is beating in my heart, for he bends gently down and kisses me, with soft lingering tenderness, upon the lips. A great bush of sweetbriar, still glistening with the dew of a summer shower that fell an hour ago, gives out its luscious fragrance, sweeter to my fancy than that of any flower that blooms.

Just by this bush we stand;—and ever since, all through the long and weary years, the scent of the sweetbriar brings back to me the memory of that day, when the river sang a lullaby to my dreaming heart;—then I forget all about the spring that comes but once in every life, and has gone by for me. I forget everything, and everyone in this wide world except the scented beauty that is all around me, and Donald's first love-kiss on my lips!

I suppose all stories of happy love have a certain resemblance to each other. However great the number of variations, still the one old-fashioned melody runs through all. "We two," that is the tune life is set to for the time being—the rose-tinted silken string on which the days, like golden beads, are strung. The world is very small for us just then; one idyl absorbs and bounds it all—"we two."

It is thus with Donald and me; each day seems too short for all the happiness it brings. Again and again I have to say to myself, "It is all real; it is no dream;" for so far away did my old life seem that, though in reality but a few weeks ago, it might have been years.

Calmly, quietly, affectionately, Mrs. Forsythe welcomed me as the future daughter of the house. I could not tell if she had been surprised or not, that sunny day, when Donald reached home and told his story, kneeling at her feet like a child, laying his head down upon her lap, to hide happy tears that started to his eyes as she blessed him and me. The shadow I noticed some time ago was over her still, and sometimes I looked up to find her watching me with such grave, sad eyes, that they haunted me even in my dreams and puzzled me there as much as in the reality of day.

Aunt Janet was in a state of such intense satisfaction, that she forgot to be

angry with Donald when he crumpled her second-best cap out of all shape in an energetic embrace.

As to Nannie, on first being told the news, she sat down abruptly, flung her apron over her head, and burst out crying; then she hugged me in her honest arms, and then begged my pardon humbly. "But I'm hardly my ain sel' this mornin'," she said, "but just like some daft boddie, Miss Mabel. I telled ye yon time I kenned it was true!" I had not the heart to reproach her; for where is the soul, gentle or simple, that can resist the intense delight of saying, "I told you so?"

Of my master's greeting to me, when I told him of my betrothal to Donald Forsythe, I cannot well bring myself to speak. Are there not moments in our lives too sacred and precious to be spoken of?

Patient Lizzie shed tears of joy over my happiness. "I'm no greeting for sadness," she said to the minister, as he bent over her tenderly; "it's just the prayers that are in my heart for the girlie, that turn to tears for lack of words!"

Heaven knows, if loving wishes and fond prayers could have kept me from sorrow, my life had known little save happiness; and I know now that I did not rate at half its true value all this love and kindness, for the one great light hid the radiance of every other, and the world was all Donald to me.

Time passes quickly when we are happy.

Honeysuckle is scenting the lanes; the pretty bladder-fern is covered with little gold-bronze grains of seed; the tall white-and-purple spears of the fox-glove rise up everywhere; and the meadow-sweet waves white perfumed plumes by the river-side. Summer is at its fulness, earth is rich in beauty, and life to me seems as beautiful and full as nature.

The minister's wife has set her delicate deft fingers at work on a wonderful piece of lace destined for my bridal finery, and Aunt Janet knits from morning till night at all sorts of garments that are capable of being manufactured on a pair of pins. Donald and I take long walks about the neighbourhood, under the idea that we are searching for rare plants for my master's Scottish Flora—a work he is always compiling, and yet never seems any nearer completion; but I don't think the Flora benefits much from our expeditions. Once,

indeed, Donald fastens a long, pinkish, straggling object, all stalk and no leaves, into his glengarry, and gravely presents it to the minister as a "new specimen." My master looks at it a moment through his large round magnifying-glass, and then lays it gently aside, with a kindly-amused smile, as he says, "Lads and lasses are but poor botanists when they have to help each other!" And I think my master was right. Just as we are about to take leave of him, he looks earnestly at Donald for a moment, and lays a loving hand upon his shoulder: "You've found one flower in these northern hills, lad, that has grown up under the eye of the poor minister, and is very precious to him." There is a quiver in my master's voice, for is not the "corner" going to be left empty again?

"Nay, say no words, lad," he continues, as Donald is about to speak, "but let the lassie come to me again some day, and say, with her little hand in mine, 'I've never had to weary, master, for the love I left behind me!'"

Grave and silent we walk home, for my master's voice and words have sobered us. Clearly, and with a tender regretfulness is this day marked in my memory; for it is the last, the very last, in which I am wholly happy and content.

The lingering walk in the gloaming, the fond "Good-night" by the white gate—it is all there; just as of those times given to help us by the memory of their sweetness in weary days to come—

... such as e'en to think of were alone  
A hive for wintry hours, though they were gone!

Aunt Janet and Nannie each greet me as I enter the house with a piece of news. Nannie tells me (with the broadest smile of which even her broad face is capable) that my "braw new gown" has duly arrived; and Aunt Janet, with an evident "arrière pensée" given to the best cap, still unfinished, tells me that Mrs. Vandaleur has arrived at The Cottage.

NEXT WEEK WILL BE COMMENCED

## A NEW SERIAL STORY.

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD,

Author of "Never Forgotten," "The Second Mrs. Tillotson," &c. &c.

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